

Indian Creek Recreation Area

BLM

California



When in the Back Country – please remember:

- ✓ Observe posted fire restrictions.
- ✓ Be careful with all fires.
- ✓ California campfire permits are required for fires outside of a developed campground.
- ✓ Pack-It-In Pack-It-Out!
- ✓ Stay on the trails – don't cut across switchbacks.
- ✓ No motor vehicles on the hiking trails.
- ✓ For safety, never hike alone.

For Further Information:

U.S. Department of the Interior
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Carson City Field Office
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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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INDIAN CREEK RECREATION AREA

Nov. 19, 1875

General Description

The land in this tp [township] is quite broken, the soil is generally 2nd and 3rd rate. It is well timbered with yellow pine tamarack and fir, the undergrowth is principally manzanita and chaparal [sic]. There is a large number of settlers in the tp whose principal occupation is cutting wood and driving it down the Carson River. It is carried off the mountains in V shaped boxes or flumes. By this means the wood is floated or rather slid to the river, a small stream of water being used to overcome the friction of the flumes. Darying [sic] is also carried on quite extensively. The following described land is swamp and overflowed, being covered with water at proper season for pulling in crops . . . The town of Markleeville, the co. seat of Alpine Co. is situated in about the S.E. 1/4 of Sec. 21. It contains a hotel, store, blacksmith shop, co. building, dwellings, etc.

(from the field notes of James R. Glover, Surveyor)

The first to call Alpine County home were the native Washoe people, who occupied the mountains and valleys of western Nevada and eastern California as long as 9,000 years ago. The Washoe excelled in basketry and spent their summers around the shores of Lake Tahoe, while winters were spent in the lower valleys which now contain the cities of Reno and Sparks, Carson City, Minden and Gardnerville. The Washoe Tribe estimates they once numbered about 5,000 individuals, but by the late 1800's their numbers had diminished to 300. Approximately 1,500 Tribal members live in the region today.

The earliest explorers through the region included Jedediah Smith and Joseph Walker, but it was John Fremont and Kit Carson in their famous midwinter trip across Alpine County and the Sierra Nevada in 1844, that brought attention to possible travel routes across the range. Followed in 1848 by members of the Mormon Battalion and a year later by the Gold Rush '49ers, the Carson Route of the California Emigrant Road, now Highway 88, was the most heavily used road to California in those early years.

However, it took silver, not gold, to bring settlement to Alpine County. Following the discovery of the Comstock Lode near Virginia City in 1859, thousands of prospectors swarmed into the eastern Sierra Nevada looking for riches. Timber from the surrounding area was floated down the Carson River to Empire, Nevada to build the Comstock mineshafts and mills.

In January 1856, John "Snowshoe" Thompson, a Norwegian emigrant, forever changed communication across the Sierras. Equipped with a mail pack (often transporting medicine and hardware as well as the mail), he made his journey on skis, often at night, alone and guided only by the stars. During the winter, Thompson was the only means of contact between Carson Valley and California, regularly passing through this area between Genoa, Nevada and Hangtown (Placerville), California.

What's The Area Like?

Situated in the eastern foothills of the Sierra Nevada, Indian Creek Recreation Area offers a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities highlighted by Indian Creek Reservoir, Indian Creek Campground and the East Fork of the Carson River. Elevation in the area ranges from 5,600 feet at the reservoir to 6,400 feet in the surrounding foothills. Pine trees and sagebrush dot the landscape.

Summers are generally warm and dry with daytime temperatures occasionally reaching 90 degrees Fahrenheit, while evenings are cool and comfortable. Sunny and dry days prevail, interspersed with periods of spectacular thunderstorms in the mid-summer months. Winter brings heavy snow at times, and temperatures can drop well below freezing. It is not unusual for the reservoir to freeze over in the winter.

Paved access is provided by Airport Road off California State Route 89 midway between Woodfords and Markleeville, California.



Things to Do

Many recreational opportunities are available at Indian Creek including fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, sailing, mountain biking, nature study, sightseeing, wildlife view-ing, bicycling, white-water rafting and photography.

Fishing is by far the most popular activity. Trout are stocked in the reservoir and at Summit Lake. The nearby East Fork of the Carson River is managed as a trophy fishery - Catch & Release those big ones! Be sure to check with the California Department of Fish and Game for current information concerning hunting and fishing seasons, limits and license requirements. The maximum speed on Indian Creek Reservoir is 10 mph.

Indian Creek Campground

A campground with 19 sites is situated next to Indian Creek Reservoir. These sites are suitable for recreational vehicles up to 34’ or tents. The restrooms have flush toilets and hot showers. Drinking water is provided and a sanitary dump station (fee charged) is available. A tents-only area, with parking nearby, has 10 sites. Both camp areas are first-come, first-serve.

A day use area has 4 picnic sites, a boat ramp, large parking lot and restrooms with flush toilets.

A Group Campsite (tents only) is available by advance reservation for groups of up to 40 campers.

All camp site use is limited to 14 days per visit. The campground generally opens the first weekend in May and closes mid to late September.

When in the Campground, please remember:

- ✓ Build fires only in the fire-rings provided. Never leave your fire unattended.
- ✓ Camp only in designated sites. Pitch tents on tent pads.
- ✓ All pets must be leashed or physically restrained at all times.
- ✓ Operate motor vehicles only on roads. Park only on pavement.
- ✓ Dispose of all rubbish in the receptacles provided.
- ✓ All natural features are protected so don't destroy, deface or collect. Dead and down wood may be used for campfires.
- ✓ Bears are frequent visitors. Do not leave food overnight on tables or in tents. Use the “bear boxes” provided.
- ✓ Indian Creek is one of many recreation areas on your public lands. Please leave it as you would like to find it – neat, clean and attractive.

Fees

There is no charge for use of the day area, which includes the picnic grounds and boat ramp. Overnight camping fees are charged for vehicle and designated tent sites, and for the group area (advance reservations). An additional vehicle charge may also apply. Please visit our web page at www.nv.blm.gov/carson for current fee rates. Camp fees are used to maintain the recreation area.

Trails

Nearly eight miles of hiking trails at Indian Creek Recreation Area offer visitors a chance to explore their natural surroundings. Popular destinations include Summit Lake, Curtz Lake and the East Fork of the Carson River. Be sure to bring along water and a snack to enjoy along the way!

Indian Creek Reservoir to Summit Lake – A little steep at first, this half mile hiking trail offers a scenic overlook of the Indian Creek area on the way to Summit Lake.

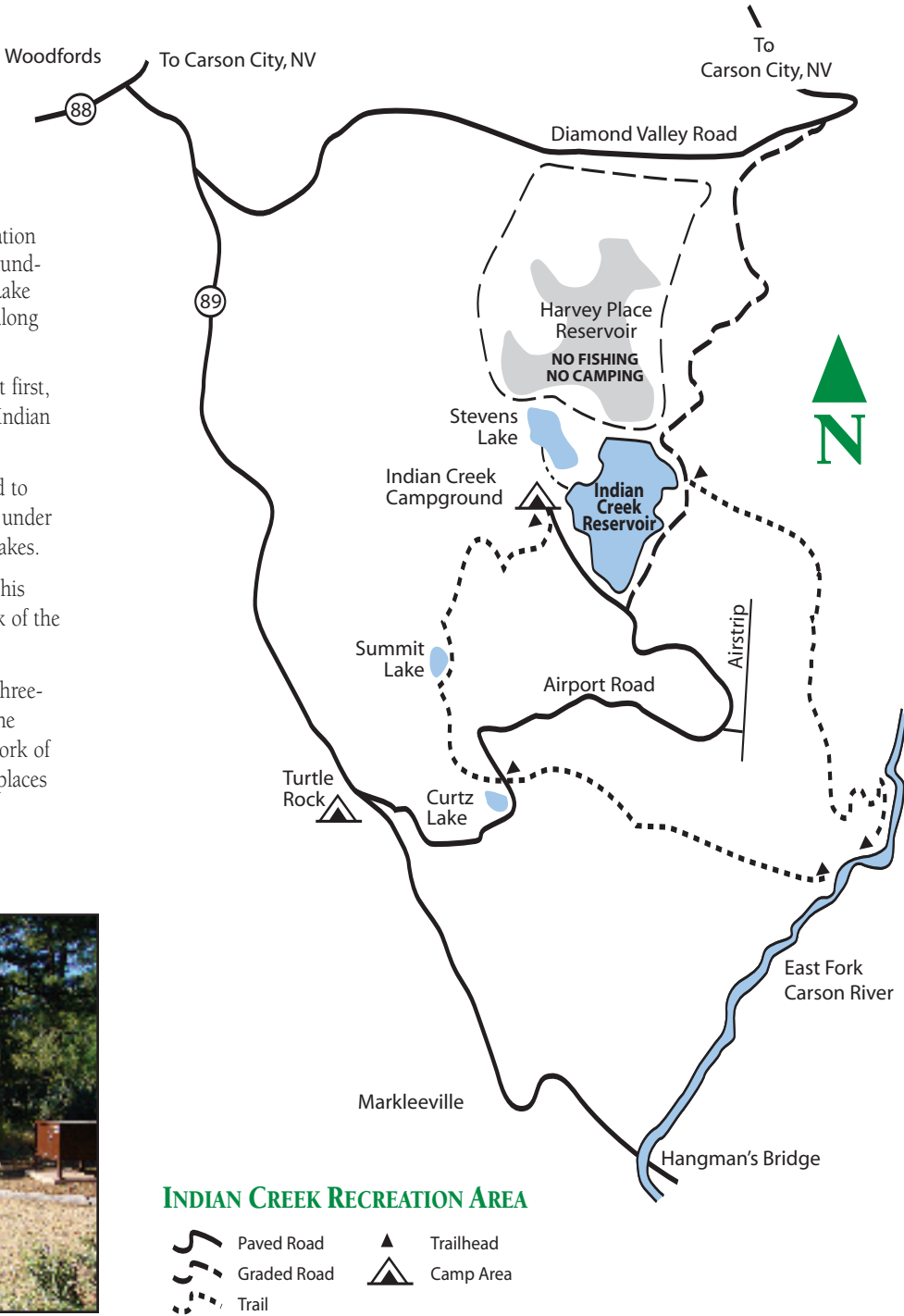
Summit Lake to Curtz Lake – This old jeep trail is closed to motor vehicle use and now is used as a hiking trail. Just under a mile long, it provides access between these two small lakes.

Curtz Lake to the Carson River – It's all downhill along this two-mile trail segment, leading to the beautiful East Fork of the Carson River. It's also all uphill on the return hike!

Indian Creek Reservoir to Carson River – This two and three-quarter mile long trail offers some spectacular vistas of the surrounding mountains. The trail descends to the East Fork of the Carson River by a series of switch-backs, is steep in places and meets the river at a pleasant clearing.



How to Get There



Curtz Lake Environmental Study Area

Curtz Lake is a natural area with easily viewed environmental processes at work. A formal study area is available for use by the general public and school groups. The study area consists of a self-guided interpretive trail that is designed for leisurely walking, so take your time and enjoy the area. A full tour should take about an hour. Detailed information markers are placed along the trail to help you learn more about your environment.

Wildlife

During your visit, you may see some of the animals that live here, such as chipmunks, squirrels, coyotes, mule deer and black bears.

The most common reptile in the area is the garter snake; it is quite harmless. Several types of lizards also can be seen. The rattlesnake is the only venomous reptile in the area and is seen on occasion, so keep an eye on your children and pets.

Birds of many different varieties, such as golden and bald eagles, and several types of hawks and owls, are common in this area. Smaller birds, such as woodpeckers, jays, blackbirds and sparrows, also live here. In spring and fall, ducks and geese frequent the area.

